

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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AT HER MERCY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LOST SIR MASSINGBERD," "A PERFECT TREASURE," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XXVI. JUDITH'S ADVICE.

EVY was passing hastily to her own room, intending there to let the pent-up grief have way, which she had restrained for her uncle's sake while in his presence, when Judith met her. "You were not coming out to me, I fear," said she, significantly.

"No, Judith, I was not; but if you have anything very particular to say I am at your service."

Her tears had dried in the presence of this woman, whom she had learnt within the last few days both to distrust and to dislike profoundly; hitherto, perhaps, and especially of late, she had also felt some fear of her, but now in her extreme wretchedness she had none.

"Your manner is not gracious, Evy," returned the other, regarding her with a searching look; "I hope you have not been set against me by anybody."

"If you mean by my uncle, no, Judith; we have not even been talking about you. And, in any case, I do not believe the ill that is said of people, until they convince me of its truth by their own behaviour."

"That is quite right and charitable, dear; and it is a pity the world does not act on the same principles. It is only too ready to believe things—when they do not redound to our credit."

"You speak, Judith, as if you were referring to something particular."

"Well, to say truth, I am. When I asked you to walk with me just now, it was but the excuse for getting an opportunity to speak with you on a matter of great importance, which may, perhaps,

not admit of delay. May I come into your room, so as to make sure we shall not be interrupted?"

Evy bowed assent, and led the way to her own chamber; it was scarcely possible indeed to refuse Judith such a request without coming to an open rupture with her; and yet, as she crossed the threshold, the thought of the ruin that had befallen her uncle, and the wreck of her own hopes, recurred to her with such force and vividness, that she felt that any talk, upon what must needs be by comparison trivial matters, would be insupportable to her.

"Do not think me uncivil, Judith, if I beg of you to let any communication you may have to make me be as brief as possible. I have heard bad news, and I feel that I can scarcely give my attention to anything else."

"Bad news!" answered Judith, gravely. "Mr. Hulet has told you then, has he. Poor girl, poor girl!"

An hour ago, Evy would have resented the tone of patronising pity in which her companion spoke, and indeed she winced under it now; but her astonishment at learning that Judith knew of her uncle's misfortune, as her words certainly seemed to imply, overcame all other feelings.

"Yes, he has told me," said Evy, "but he did not say he had told you."

"I can easily believe that," sighed Judith, with a quiet smile.

"Yes, Evy, I know all about it. Your uncle is no longer a rich man. Fortunately, however, it will be in my power to prevent him from being a very poor one."

"And you will do that?" cried Evy, eagerly. "Oh, Judith, forgive me, for in my heart I have done you wrong. I thought you cold and hard, and so did—" She hesitated and coloured deeply.

"And your uncle, you were about to say, thought so too?" continued Judith, keenly. "Well, well, I don't blame him. It is only natural that a man overwhelmed by misfortune and obloquy should give way to bitter thoughts."

"Obloquy, Judith? That means censure, disgrace—I don't know what you mean. Who has dared to impute bad faith—anything worse than having faith in those unworthy of it—to my uncle?"

"I see," said Judith, slowly. "He has not told you, or only told you half."

"I shall return, then, and ask him to tell me all; these odious innuendoes shall be exposed, refuted," cried Evy, rising from her chair; but notwithstanding her bold words, the recollection of her uncle's phrase, "Self-respect is gone, too; all, all is gone," made her sick at heart.

Judith shrugged her shoulders. "You will do as you please, of course, Evy; but such a course will only distress Mr. Hulet, and cause a breach between himself and me. He will naturally be angry with me for having hinted to you what he thought it wise, knowing your impulsive character, to keep from your knowledge. He was right, it seems, and I was wrong."

Judith's coolness no longer irritated Evy, but appalled her. She was wiser, stronger than herself in every way, and since Mr. Hulet had confessed all to her, he must have judged her—whatever ill opinion he had of her in other respects—at least worthy of his confidence. Judith had the power to serve her uncle, which urged Evy not to offend her; and, above all, she had shown a desire to do so, which had touched her heart.

"Do not be so cold and contemptuous to me, Judith," cried the poor girl, "but if you feel any kindness for me, any tender recollection of the past, be pitiful. I am more wretched than words can tell or you can guess."

"Poor child, poor child," murmured Judith, this time, as it seemed, with a genuine touch of feeling. "I wish it was in my power to afford you comfort; but as it is, I can do little for you, beyond giving advice—and even that, perhaps, you will distrust and therefore decline."

"Why should I distrust it, Judith?" asked Evy, simply. "I cannot suppose you would willingly deceive me, being your friend, and in such sad straits; you are wiser than I, and better versed in the world's ways, why then should I decline it?"

"Because you have misread my character, Evy, all along," answered Judith, slowly. "I have had to work my way up the ladder of life, holding fast by each step that I have gained, and without leisure for resting and admiring the prospect such as you have enjoyed. It is true that I have reached a higher round than I had at one time any hopes of doing, but I am only just beginning to know what it is to be safe and at my ease. That sort of bringing up, you know, makes a man—and much more a woman—cautious, unsympathetic, and perhaps even, as you have just hinted, cynical. I am not gushing, like you, dear, I confess it. I have never been able to afford to gush; but I hope I have my feelings, like other folks. Then, again, I am not blinded by false sentiment; or if you will have it so, by sentiment of any kind. I see people, that look to you like saints, without their halo; or, perhaps, since I was a person of no consequence, the saints did not in my presence give themselves the trouble to wear them. I saw in the late Mrs. Hulet, for instance—indeed she never considered it worth while to hide it from me—a selfish hypochondriac, irritating, tiresome, full of the most sensitive feelings as regarded herself, but perfectly pachydermatous when those of others were concerned—a woman utterly heartless—"

"Pardon me," interrupted Evy, firmly; "you are mistaken there. She was not heartless. I do not assert it merely from my own experience, though she was always most kind, most thoughtful for me; but, Captain Heyton"—here her voice trembled a little—"will, I am sure, if you ask him, corroborate that fact."

"Yes; you see," continued Judith coolly, "every one speaks as he finds, or seems to find. My spectacles, as I have told you, did not happen to be rose-tinted. In my eyes, Mrs. Hulet was a heartless, insolent woman."

"Oh, Judith, Judith, remember, she was buried this very day."

"There you are again, my dear Evy, with your sentiment. You would have me speak like an epitaph, rather than hear the truth, and have your feelings shocked. I cannot forget (though I assure you it has been forgiven) the irritation, nay, the disgust, which you exhibited when I ventured to affirm that this very person was unhappy in her lifetime, and might possibly have even sought her death. There, you see, you will not even listen to me. And yet you will have to listen, Evy; if not to

me, to others, who will assert this very thing."

"They will do so, then, in the teeth of the truth, which yesterday's verdict has established," said Evy, as calmly as she could.

"The verdict, yes; but that can't prevent the world saying what it pleases, what it suspects, which brings me round to the very subject on which, for your own sake, Evy, I wished to speak to you, if you will but have the courage, and the honesty, to listen to me."

"I will listen to you, Judith, but I do not promise to believe you."

"Well, that is honest, at all events; and, as it happens, I don't want you to believe me, but only to understand your uncle's position, as it is likely to affect your own. You will not deny, I suppose, that some very unpleasant reflections were made during Mrs. Hulet's lifetime upon the cat-and-dog life (as some people called it) which she and her husband led together; so long as they were both alive, the fault was attributed to both: 'it was six of one and half a dozen of the other,' the gossips said, but now that one is dead the survivor comes in for all the reprobation. This would perhaps have happened in any case, but the unexpectedness and mystery of Mrs. Hulet's death have been such as to give malice a very grievous handle. I say nothing of my own opinions, please to observe, Evy; I am merely describing (and they are, after all, but natural) the ideas that I know are passing through the minds of others concerning the matter, and which are certain to find expression."

"They have been expressed already, Judith, in the verdict."

"There you are quite wrong. The verdict having, as it were, favoured your uncle, public opinion will be all the less inclined to spare him."

"Favoured?" observed Evy. "That is a very unpleasant term."

"But it is a true one. Neither coroner nor jury would place themselves in an invidious position if they could help it. If they had any justifiable means of escaping from it, even in an undoubted criminal case, they are always prone, you know, to give the prisoner 'the benefit of the doubt.' There was here, of course, neither crime nor prisoner; but, Evy, if I had given such evidence as I could have given"—and here Judith's voice sank low, though every word was clear and incisive—"if I had expressed the opinions I had expressed to you, and

which I was asked to give, those men would have had no such loophole. They must needs have returned an open verdict, 'Found Drowned,' or some such phrase, which would have left this matter unsettled, even legally, and liable to be reopened at any time. That, at least, Evy, has been averted. Your uncle need apprehend no further trouble from the law; and if he asks, as perhaps he is now asking himself, to what good fortune he is indebted for this result, I reply that he is indebted to you. Mind, I may have been wrong throughout. Mrs. Hulet may have had no more idea of committing suicide than you or I, or if she did commit it, it may have had nought to do with her husband's conduct; but such was my honest opinion, and but for your sake, and for the words you spoke to me as I entered that jury-room, I should have done my duty, and expressed it. As it is, when you read my evidence in the newspaper, you will willingly allow that I have permitted truth (or what I considered to be such) to weigh but little against the claims of friendship."

"Indeed," said Evy, slowly, "I suppose I ought to be thankful to you so far, though if you had expressed what seems to have been your conviction, you would have done my uncle a very grievous wrong."

"Well, we will not discuss that, Evy, especially since the solid results of the affair are in your favour. But what I wish to make you understand is, that others will not give up this point, and that your uncle knows it. It is true that he has suffered great losses, but he does not impose upon me when he states that it is on their account he is so suddenly about to leave this neighbourhood. He is well aware that it will presently be made very unpleasant for him, even if it does not become too hot to hold him; and I am much mistaken if what I am now about to say to you has not already passed through his own mind. For him it would be difficult to express it, and for me it is not easy, since it concerns you, my dear Evy, in the tenderest relations of your life. Nobody who knows Captain Heyton—"

"Judith," interrupted Evy, with dignity, "I cannot permit this. I cannot guess, indeed, what you are about to say, but if your advice to me has anything to do with my relations with Captain Heyton, I must beg of you not to give it. I may not be the best judge, but I should certainly be

the only one upon such a matter. Even my uncle——"

"Ah, he has been speaking to you on the subject then," cried Judith, triumphantly. "Well, you won't let me speak on it; but at all events let my entreaties be added to his. I can guess what he has told you or has wished to tell; and he is right. The consequences of delay just now—the giving way to conventional propriety in postponing your marriage in consequence of what has happened here—may be fatal to you."

"You are speaking in enigmas, Judith; I don't know what you mean."

"Nay, it is clear enough; Captain Heyton is too faithful, too honourable to give you up merely because you have become poor; he may himself disregard the scandalous rumours that are sure to circulate concerning your uncle; but as these grow and grow, just as the circles in the water when a stone is dropped in it, they will presently reach the ears of Lord Dirleton. This will set his lordship more against his nephew's union with yourself than ever, and may induce him to withdraw even that sum for which he has, as it were, commuted his inheritance. What your uncle would have you do then, and I, and all your well-wishers, is to lose no time in making the captain your own——"

"Forbear," cried Evy, passionately; "I will hear no more, Judith. It is perhaps through that bringing up of yours, to whose charge you have laid other peculiarities of your character which to my mind are not pleasing, that you offer advice, so strange, so coarse, so——"

"Don't spare me, dear," observed Judith, coolly, perceiving that her companion was hesitating as to whether she should use even some stronger word to express her feelings, "if it is any relief to you to speak out; I spoke out myself, because I felt that this matter was one of the last importance to you; that there was no time for false delicacy——"

"Nor for delicacy of any kind, one would think," broke in Evy, indignantly. "It may be that you mean me well, and I am content to believe it; but I must beg of you to drop this subject, and to be silent upon it for the future."

Once more Judith shrugged her plump shoulders, but this time keeping her eyes fixed on the carpet, as though in some embarrassment.

"I very much regret I have annoyed you, Evy; since you bid me be silent, I of

course obey you, though I think had I used the grace of manner that you possess yourself, and expressed my views upon this matter less bluntly, I should have escaped giving you offence. Believe me, once for all, I intended none. Don't you think a stroll in the garden would do you good, dear? Well, well, perhaps you are right. When one has got to think out a matter of importance, one's own room is the best place after all. But you look dreadfully fagged and worried, so I shall tell Jane to bring you up a cup of tea."

A cup of tea! Most feminine complaints, it is true, are greatly mitigated by that sovereign remedy; but Evy's case was beyond it. A cup of poison would have been more welcome to her. Indeed, so far as herself was concerned, she would in that supreme hour of hopelessness and humiliation have hailed death gladly. The sunshine of existence was over for ever; the darkness was closing in around her young life without a hope of dawn. She had known before that she must give up her lover; the terrible stigma attaching to her uncle, of which Judith had spoken, made no difference as to that; but in the former case she had felt some supporting sense of sacrifice of self, of loving duty towards him; and that was gone now. Only the bare wretched fact remained. How she envied her poor aunt (whom she had so pitied awhile ago), removed from this world of shame and trouble! One thing only gave her strength—the recollection of the grey-haired broken man she had left in yonder room, with none to lean on except her. To him, she would henceforth dedicate herself as many a girl of another faith whose love-dream has been shattered, dedicates herself to Heaven. It was a no less sacred calling, and indeed, in the true sense, it was the same. Happiness in her future was not to be expected, but peace might still be found. Yes, for now she would "suffer and be strong," and help her uncle to live down whatever ill-report might soil the tongues of men concerning him. But her heart was sad and sore, indeed, within her, and all its chambers that had been furnished forth to entertain the guest that maidens sigh for, were emptied and made desolate.

ELBOW-ROOM.

HUMANITY, and indeed life, in all its higher organisms, has great need of elbow-room. Cryptogamons may huddle together in a darkling existence, but the giant oak

tree craves both space and sunshine. Rabbits may dwell contented among the ferny knolls and honeycombed banks of their warren, but the great herds of the bison require half a continent for the stately march of their browsing myriads. Room, range, the power to grow, to develop, to satisfy the restless love of change that is always latent in even the dullest soul, these have been requirements of both savage and civilised man. And, indeed, the savage needs them most. Elbow-room, to the hunter, is synonymous with daily bread. Forced to kill ere he can eat, each day's sustenance depends on his superior activity and cunning. It is not enough that he approves himself more wily, bolder, more adroit, than the wild things that supply his precariously-furnished larder. He must roam as they roam. He must pursue them to their forest fastnesses, and if they withdraw to haunts more remote, he must follow, or die.

But even to the hunter space is hardly more valuable than it is to the tribes that occupy the second stage in social progress, the pastoral people whose flocks and herds are their only wealth, and the desert or the steppe their home. Mongol and Tartar, Berber and Arab, still, through the northern and central portion of two continents, every day reproduce the unchanging feature of patriarchal life. Give them grass and water, and they ask no more than to rove from the summer camp on the uplands, to the green valleys where winter pasturage abounds. Everywhere the black tents rise to reproduce the roofs of a village community that carries with it its Lares and Penates, and that alters not amid scenes the most dissimilar. In prosperous times the nomads are not very bad neighbours. A little cattle-lifting, an occasional highway robbery, are atoned for by freehanded hospitality towards the guest who claims their protection. But when the wells run dry, or when the locusts come down in a dark cloud to devour every green thing, leaving the earth bare behind them, there is an end of all this smiling picture. For then tribe presses upon tribe, struggling for the precious water and the priceless herbage that cannot suffice for all.

Perhaps some of the most stubborn battles in the world have been due to these encroachments of wandering nations, goaded by hunger, on the territories adjoining theirs. Professional soldiers, prompted by glory or braced by dis-

cipline, can scarcely surpass the desperate valour of these hardy herdsmen when fairly brought to bay. Those Helvetians who faced Caesar's legionaries, and not one of whom, through three long days of terrible slaughter, was seen to turn his back before the Roman onset, won the great conqueror's admiration, barbarians though they were. But the mountaineers were fighting under the very eyes of their wives and sisters; all that made life worth having was inclosed within the triple rampart of their white-topped waggons, where women and children, flocks and herds, their poor household gear, and their simple possessions, were lodged as in a fortress; and flight implied not merely disgrace and misery, but sheer ruin also. Theirs was no sentimental feeling for the honour of a flag, but merely the dogged, deep-rooted resolve to hold their own.

As a general rule, in the enforced migrations of clans and people of the far-off East, the battle was to the hungry. The lords of the soil made stout resistance, no doubt, to the trespassers on their immemorial grazing grounds, and many a stream was dyed blood-red before the cattle of the intruders could slake their thirst in its waters. But beggary is proverbially valiant, and, after a sharp trial of strength, the ruder and poorer tribe drove back the old possessors of the land. Wave upon wave, like an advancing tide, the mighty flood of Mongol emigration set steadily westward. The enervated Romans saw with horror the successive incursions of Hun, Turk, and Avar, each tribe pushed forward by the pressure of fiercer hordes behind. It is strange to reflect on the fact that some unknown incident in Eastern Asia, the triumph of a Chinese general, the sallying forth of swarms of grasshoppers from the great desert of Gobi, may have proved fatal to the luxurious inhabitants of the Byzantine frontier. Much the same may be said of the southward movement that brought Goths and Vandals and Suevi, like so many icebergs floating down under the thawing influence of the warm summer sun, within the charmed circle of the Roman Empire. The predecessors of Alaric and Genseric, like those of Attila and Mahomet the Second, sought, not for spoil, but for elbow-room. Civilisation, certainly, does make mankind tolerant of close packing. The agriculturist, and still more, the trader, cheerfully endures a deficiency of space which would be repugnant to a nation of shepherds. The most

densely peopled rural tract of country, the Flowery Land alone excepted, is notoriously the flat Pays de Waes, a sort of Flemish China, bearing the heaviest root-crops, to supply the many hungry mouths of those whose patient hands are busy in its tillage. But the citizens of old, whether Greek or Roman, or of mediæval Europe, were eminently squeezable, as their narrow streets and crowded dwelling-places attest. Common interests, mutual reliance, and the division of labour, all prompt people to lean on one another, and to be pleased with the propinquity which facilitates the buying and selling, the quick production and ready barter, which are the life-blood of trade. There is a fine contrast between some burgher of Florence, or of Pisa, who had perhaps scarcely ever in his life been absolutely alone, who took his pleasure in public, as he transacted his business, and who could hardly have drawn breath freely away from the piazzas and the arcades of his native city, and the morose individuality of Colonel Daniel Boone. Yet the grim old bear-hunter, when he pronounced a population of eight to the square mile "inconveniently crowded," and moved resentfully off, deeper into the uncleared forest, was probably no more a hater of his species than was Messer Pietro, or Messer Giuseppe, or however the typical citizen might be called. The Italian townfolk of the middle ages were gregarious to a degree that we can hardly comprehend, but it was less affection and sympathy than habit and fear that knit them together. The sheep clustered in masses, rather from dread of the wolves without the walls, feudal nobles, robber companies, rival commonwealths, than from genuine love of their brother muttens. The American backwoodsman, on the other hand, strongly self-reliant, felt elbow-room to be the first necessity of life, and sought for it according to the instincts of his nature. Egypt, in many respects distinct from other countries, had the marked peculiarity of nourishing multitudes within an area limited by natural causes, and constantly in danger of decrease. The husbandman of the Nile Valley dreads the desert, as the Dutch farmer dreads the sea, that roars and rolls high above the level of his rich meadows. Indeed, Egypt, where the dry land is ever threatening to swallow up the moist alluvial earth, is the direct antithesis to Holland, and the Fellah's great fear, next to a deficiency in the Nile floods, is the encroachment of the desert sand. That

is a foe against which the simple means of irrigation which the poor cultivators possess are in ceaseless requisition, against whose inroads every palm-tree is a fortress, every patch of greenery an entrenched camp, since water and vegetation alone can scare away the gaunt wolf from an Egyptian cottage-door. Kings who chafed at the contracted boundaries of the Delta have waged costly war on nature, digging canals, forming artificial lakes, struggling to annex the desert. But the desert, in the long run, aided by war and misgovernment, has proved an overmatch for Pharaoh or Ptolemy, and the granary of the Eastern Empire has now not much corn to spare. The lack of elbow-room has been as a millstone round the neck of what was once the wealthiest of kingdoms.

The discovery of America acted as a magic watchword, as a kind of "Open Sesame," applied to flesh and blood, on the restless spirits of Europe. Individual enterprise had never before had such a field. For the founding of a Greek colony had been merely the sending forth from the parent hive of a young swarm to build cells of precisely the old pattern, and the Teutonic migrations had been the transference of a prince and people from one home to another. Now, for the first time, a dazzling prospect of easily earned abundance was displayed before the longing eyes of born adventurers, and with it the hope of breaking loose from the fetters of an exacting and antiquated social system. The wonderful Western Indies, that transatlantic Tom Tiddler's Ground, where rubies were as pebbles, and where the roofs were tiled with gold, had more to offer than the pearls and the silver, the massy ingots and the flashing emeralds, of which sunburned rovers boasted to homestaying listeners. There was freedom to be found there—not the highest idea of liberty, perhaps—but still the right to shake off some of the restraints of decaying feudalism and growing kingcraft. Here was a new world, not as yet hedged and fenced, and set with legal man-traps and statutory spring-guns, as Europe had long been; and the pioneers of emigration, Spanish and French, English, Dutch, and Portuguese, rushed to the country of their adoption with something of the madcap delight of schoolboys out of bounds.

Not merely the name, but the very principle of emigration, would have been

strange and hateful to old rulers of the paternal stamp, or to the meddlesome parliaments that supplemented their authority. The monstrous heresy of encouraging the departure of the king's lieges would have found no favour in their eyes. As well expect a colonel to connive at the desertion of his smartest soldiers, as a mediæval monarch to sanction the exodus of hinds and artisans. Hodge was needed to drive the plough in peace, and in time of war he must shoulder his brown-bill and march with the king's militia. Flap-capped Will and Hal had their work to do with hammer and shears, not forgetting to muster with tough yew bows and cloth-yard arrows, when the trainbands turned out. These industrious persons did not exist for their own benefit, but for that of the king's grace, of holy church, and of their fellow citizens, and to transfer their labour elsewhere was a downright robbery of the commonweal. As for any wish to try his fortunes beyond seas, which presumptuous Hodge might entertain, he was held to have no more right to a will of his own than Tripolemus Yellowley, in the *Pirate*, to demur to the compulsory hospitality that was traditional in Shetland.

It was on false pretence, so to speak, that the earlier emigrants were permitted to quit the country of their birth. Such sovereigns as Isabella and her imperial grandson regarded the truants from Old Spain as the missionaries and crusaders of the New. To convert the heathen; by sharp arguments, indeed; and to replenish the treasury of Madrid with tribute wrung from a hundred provinces—these were worthy and kindred objects in the eyes of their Catholic majesties. Nor were other potentates unwilling that their subjects should have a finger in the pie where golden plums lay so temptingly. Thus Elizabeth encouraged the barefaced buccaneering of Drake and Raleigh, and saw no cause why the queen's highness should not stand sponsor to the Virginian colony, and get for England some share of the good things with which that inquisitive Genoese pilot had, in her grandfather's time, so largely endowed the pestilent Spaniard. But down to the days of American Independence, and that later date when the Spanish colonies asserted their freedom, no parent state regarded the plantations as other than milch-kine, existing for the emolument of the mother-country, while the settlers were tolerated

rather than approved of, like so many half wild sheep, prone to stray too far afield, and by no means up to the standard of quiet steady-going sheephood.

The long-continued, ever-renewed strife between privileged artificers, privileged merchants, and the mass of malcontent mechanics and disqualified chapmen, was simply a contest for elbow-room. Middle-aged society was hag-ridden by the nightmare of vested interests, to a pitch that was equally absurd and painful. Monopoly was rampant everywhere, from the baron's mill, whither the unwilling peasants plodded with their sacks of coarse grain, to the workshop, where no apprentices not free of the city were allowed to learn a trade. Confiscation and fine warned off the purchaser who would buy from any dealer not affiliated to the authorised company. Grocer and draper, currier and cutler, had a claim to your custom, which could not legally be eluded. Hereditary shopkeepers grew up to rear fresh families whose inalienable birthright it was to sell inferior wares at protective prices. It was not the fault of the legislators of that day that classes were not, as among Hindoos, fossilised, and that every occupation was not made over in perpetuity to a caste. Long, hard, and cruel was the smouldering war of riotous discontent and harsh repression, until at last guilds and privileges, arts and mysteries, were fairly put to the rout, and what rags and relics of the antique system yet exist came to wear little more than an archæological interest.

Some wild and erratic spirits, some vigorous and self-assertive natures, have in all ages set Mrs. Grundy at defiance, daring to strike out a separate path. To be a hermit or an outlaw, to don goat-skins or slay the royal deer, was the alternative that lay, a few centuries since, before the self-willed. In both cases there was an escape from the leading-strings of a ceremonious society. But the anchorite was apt to degenerate into the moody and squalid savagery of a Fakir; and the more jovial outlaw, he of the ringing horn and rattling quiver, for all his gay garb of Lincoln green, and the conventional pleasures of his career, had his full share of hardships, and was likely to be hanged. Those were not times for the indulgence of individual whims. A Bampfylde Moore Carew, that amateur gipsy whose adventures delighted the children of a past generation, could not have existed when the penal laws against Egyptian vagrom

men were strictly enforced. Branding and scourging, nailing of ears, and slitting of noses, with a hempen cord and a short shift in prospect, would have surely outweighed the fascinations of Zingara life, although even these caustic remedies failed to extirpate the Asiatic parasites of European civilisation.

The eighteenth century, while the elements of the great political earthquake were slowly fermenting, witnessed more than one moral revolt against the tyranny of habit. It must have needed much courage to appear in public plainly dressed, and with no capillary covering save that furnished by nature, at a time when wig and gold lace, ruffled shirt and buckled shoes, the silver-handled sword and the embroidered waistcoat, seemed the indispensable externals of a gentleman. Worst of these, hose, shoestrings, black stocks, and unpowdered hair, came presently to have an ominous significance, while a certain bluntness of manner, which went well with such studied simplicity of raiment, marked the advocates of change. Oddly enough, that tremendous old lexicographer in the shabby brown coat and snuff-begrimed cravat, was himself unconsciously a standard-bearer of rebellion against the principles he revered. The toughest of Tories, a royalist to the backbone, the editor of the *Rambler* did much to spread the growth of democratic feeling. In truth, Johnson's combative manliness was out of tune with his submissive theories; his sturdy knees, like those of a more scholarly Tell, were too stiff to bend before any hat howsoever gorgeous and highly-placed; and when he opposed his literary cudgel to the courtly rapier of Lord Chesterfield's dainty sarcasm, he was virtually fighting the battle of common sense and homely honesty against the patched and perfumed hollow-ness of the age he lived in. The very sight of that huge form, uncouth in garb and gait, rolling heavily along, and the knowledge that the hard-hitting moralist had fought his way up, unhelped, from the humblest station to be a power in England, was, as it were, an embodied protest against the moribund world of fops and cabals, of fine clothes and speeches that were false as fair.

As laws grew milder, and a liberal latitude of choice came to be allowed to the units of the community, diversities of taste became more marked, and Bohemianism blossomed into an institution. Without doubt there always were Bohemians, but

in Plantagenet or Tudor times they were more often mere flotsam and jetsam floated down the currents of events, than persons who had deliberately chosen to dissent from decorous uniformity of manners. The poor player, whom the law called vagabond, and whom Justice Shallow sometimes set in the stocks, was hardly permitted to be respectable. The viol-player, the performer on the lute, the disbanded captain with greasy buff coat and clattering broadsword, sighing for a fresh war, the lean poet in search of a patron, the spendthrift who had brought his noble to ninepence, formed a needy and not over reputable society, given to drink and dice, haunting low-browed taverns, and frequenting the sanctuary of Alsatia. Poverty, not preference, kept these waifs together. Even the fat knight, pattern roysterer as he was, vowed to amend and keep impeccable company in case solid promotion should reward his fabled exploits at Shrewsbury. Whoever could, by some sudden stroke of fortune, afford clean linen and good lodgings was sure to desert the comradeship of Desperate Dicks and idle gamblers. Themis co-operated in thinning the ranks of those outsiders, by bending her frowning brow on the insolvent occupants of this mediæval Adullam. Beadles burst into ale-houses and the dwellings of dubious vintners, on some fine Sunday forenoon, and drove the toppers to church by unsparing application of their parochial staves. The worshipful the sheriff made a raid, now and again, upon the haunts of the reckless, sweeping off scores of black sheep to do penance in Bridewell or the Compter. Is it not recorded to the praise of my good lord, Thomas Cromwell, Earl of Essex, that meeting in Eastcheap with some rakish swaggerer, whose battered finery and long locks displeased the keeper of King Harry's conscience, he bade his followers crop the man's hair close to his head, and then sent him to prison for a quasi contempt of court in wearing it? The chronicler evidently considered this a most wholesome exercise of just authority, but we should be somewhat startled now-a-days if any contemporary lord chancellor were to act upon the time-honoured precedent.

The comparatively harmless Bohemians of our own day are living proofs of the great change of ideas that has gradually taken place, and of the gulf that divides our modes of thought from those of our ancestors. Our forefathers, in the single-

minded conviction that they knew minutely what was right, tolerated no exceptions. Birds that could sing, so they held, must be made to pipe properly at the accredited social pitch. We are more lukewarm, and perhaps less confident, and hence whoever chooses to join the Bohemian camp and to laugh at domesticity, and denounce, between the whiffs of his pipe, the Philistines of respectability, is free to do so. Nobody cares to persecute the modern cynic for choosing a sidewalk in preference to the broad high-road. Diogenes in frayed velvet, with unshorn chin and briar-root pipe, has nothing to fear from the orthodox majority who go about in broadcloth, and shave, and entertain no æsthetic convictions on the subject of light and sweetness. Let but Diogenes pay his weekly bills, and he may rail as he lists. The county-court is the only Philistian institution that may work to his detriment.

A singular but not unhealthy reaction against the results of civilisation has of late years set in. The love of wild land, of picturesque scenery, of spreading seas, giant cliffs, of mountain peaks and darkling forests and stretches of moorland, glowing crimson with the ripe blossoms of the scented heather, dates, at the earliest, from the period of the French Revolution and the rise of the romantic school of poetry. It is chiefly among the educated that this passion for untamed and unspoiled nature is found, and indeed it often appears to increase progressively with the degree of mental culture. Such a taste can hardly be classed among the simple instincts of mankind. It is, indeed, scarcely fair to place a savage in the witness-box in such a case, for his hand-to-mouth life has dulled some senses while sharpening others. To him the most delicious perfumes and the vilest odours are alike indifferent. His sight and hearing are finely developed, for on them depend his dinner and his safety, but, so far as utility is concerned, he might as well be noseless. We can hardly wonder that the keen eyes which detect the lightest footprint of bird or beast so unerringly should pass carelessly over the grandest landscape in the world.

Our own flesh and blood, even our lettered forefathers in square-cut coats and tie-wigs, saw nature through different coloured spectacles to those through which we now behold her. Uncultivated land they positively disliked. To them a mountain range was a grim fact that had to be

scrambled over with painful toil and some danger. A moor spread before them its many-tinted surface, now smiling in the sunshine, now dark beneath a passing cloud, merely to be considered as an ugly plain full of quagmires in which a horse could sink to the saddle-girths, and where there were great facilities for losing one's way, or being stopped by Captain Macheath. In truth, to them an expanse of wild ground did not appear in the least lovely, but simply uncomfortable, barren, and beggarly. A wood, when the white May-flowers were thick, and the young leaves wore their tenderest green, was all very well on a summer's holiday; but a fertile vale like that of Aylesbury, with its many acres under the plough, sheep feeding on the fallows, red kine grazing within the well-hedged fields, won from them an admiration which they would have withheld from Loch Katrine or from Clovelly. The sea itself was to them but a melancholy ocean, giving out noxious vapours. The lakes of Cumberland or Wales were collections of fresh water, offering perhaps some slight advantages in respect to the conveyance of farm produce by boat. Even Goldsmith lavished on the windmills and the canals of Holland an enthusiasm which we now reserve for the High Alps and the other exceptionally choice gems of the world-wide panorama.

Possibly with us the desire for elbow-room has grown in proportion as the chance of gratifying it, so far as home-staying folks are concerned, lessens daily. Our large towns are Briarean as to the brick and mortar arms with which they lock square miles of country in their fatal embrace. The black smoke of tall chimneys withers tree and flower alike in many a spot once renowned for sylvan beauty, and the refuse of dye-works scares away the disgusted Naiads from many a tinkling stream that once ran silver white among the broad-leaved lilies and nodding reeds. High farming is a cruel foe to the picturesque, and as nature becomes more and more bitted and bridled, and kept to regular work, the beauty of glen and woodland tends to disappear. We cannot wonder, then, that things being as they are, every suburban villa lets the better for commanding a view of perhaps a clump of fir trees and some patch of golden gorse, or that strenuous efforts should be made to preserve some scraps and fragments of health-giving recreation grounds for the toiling millions of Londoners.

MODERN ROMAN MOSAICS.

THE EVE OF ST. JOHN.

THE ancient basilica of the Lateran, which proudly styles herself the "Mother and Head of all the churches of the city and the world," stands on a wide, open space of ground looking away from Rome across the sad Campagna to the Sabine Hills. On a summer's morning or evening all the place is steeped in a pathetic beauty. Silence, sunlight, and peace, brood, dove-like, over the scene. A soft haze glitters on the mighty, mournful plain. The clouds above the mountain-tops are touched with rose-colour. It is as though Memory and Hope had met and kissed each other.

You may be quite solitary there at the hour of dawn or twilight; and, forgetting the labouring city near at hand, fancy that the stream of your life has floated you into some bay or creek of an enchanted region, whose only chroniclers are the poets; whose air, unlike the Lethean waters, instils oblivion of all save the past; and where old Time himself pauses, leans on his scythe, and looks backward.

But sudden changes and marvellous contrasts belong, by right, to regions of enchantment. And, if you will come with me this blessed midsummer eve to the great grass-grown space around San Giovanni Laterano, you will hear noise and see people enough to make up for the solitude and silence of all the rest of the year.

It is the vigil of the Feast of St. John the Baptist; that is to say, it is the night of the twenty-third of June. Rome, at midsummer, is a terra incognita to most travellers. This Feast of St. John's Eve is a festival specially loved by the Romans. They have it mostly to themselves. There are no crowds of inquisitive foreigners staring and elbowing, as at the Easter celebrations, and other high tides of the Romish Church. The forestieri are gone to the cool side of the big Alp wall, and have left the Eternal City to the Romans and to me!

It is an exquisite, serene night. The pure, deep blue of the sky is strewn with throbbing stars. The air is delicious with that soft freshness peculiar to Roman summer evenings, and the dew falls refreshingly on the short, dry grass of the wide space between the church of the Lateran and that of the Holy Cross.

Per Bacco! the familiar adoration to

the god of wine, who is invoked by Italians in season and out of season, is appropriate on this occasion, at all events. What a scene breaks on us as we emerge on to the great, open place in front of the basilica! What noise, what confusion, what movement! There are here some thirty thousand human creatures—men, women, and children—dancing, drinking, fiddling, piping, twanging guitars, grinding barrel-organs, singing, shouting, bawling, at the full pitch of their lungs! Yonder are the booths of vendors of *salame*—a kind of sausage, plentifully flavoured with garlic—fried fish, bread, cakes, water, wine, lemonade, beer—yes; even beer!—maccaroni, and Heaven knows what eatables and drinkables besides. Here, on the grass, are thickly-scattered various family groups: fathers, mothers, children, friends, lovers; old, young, and middle-aged, chatting, laughing, eating, drinking, and enjoying themselves. Hecatombs of roast fowls, mountains of maccaroni, tuns of red wine, disappear down the throats of the Roman popolani. Eating and drinking, by way of accompaniment and crown to all manner of merry-making, are supposed by some people to be exclusively British observances. Just look at the preparations for feeding this Roman holiday crowd, and then say what you think on that subject!

See, to our left, where there is a small clear space, they are dancing with all their might to the music of a piffero and a tambourine. The principal dancers are a young couple of Trasteverini—folks from the other side of the Tiber—and fine specimens of the human animal they are. The girl is tall, full-busted, broad-shouldered, stalwart of limb. Her massive coils of black hair have come unfastened in the rapid movements of the tarantella—or, perhaps, have been allowed to fall with artful negligence; for coquetry is no hot-house plant, but flourishes as vigorously among the female children of Nature as among the fine dames who allow themselves to be tastelessly and inartistically clothed according to the vulgar vagaries of a Parisian man-milliner—and the long heavy plaits hang down below her waist. Her brown cheeks glow. Her great lustrous eyes shine under their black brows. Now her partner seizes her by the waist, and fairly lifts her into the air as they whirl round and round, faster and faster, while the pifferaro emits hoarse, breathless shrieks from his shrill instrument, and

the panting tambourine toils after them in vain.

A little farther on we come to a group of waltzers; four or five couples performing new steps and unexpected turns to the sound of a drunken fiddle and a wheezy barrel-organ, which is evidently more than half seas over. Here the girls are Montigiane, women from the hill villages around Rome. They wear the short petticoat, crimson bodice embroidered with gold lace, and striped kerchief thickly folded and disposed squarely on the head in the Neapolitan fashion, which compose an admirably picturesque costume. Coral and pearl necklaces show their delicate rose-colour and creamy white, against nut-brown throats. And massive gold ear-rings dangle and bob in time to the waltzing.

There is singing, too, be sure! In this land of song you cannot fail to hear discordant and strenuous yelling from powerful lungs and brassy throats, which (being in Italy), you *must* perforce delight in, as charming specimens of truly popular music. Moreover there greet the ear scraps from operas, curiously distorted as to the music, and comically distorted as to the words. A passionate phrase of Verdi, a melodious bar or two of Bellini, a sparkling tune of Donizetti, may be distinguished every now and then above the general sound, chaos of instruments and voices, drunken and sober. It is curious to hear, in the intervals of a hoarse bawling to commend the excellence of some *pesce fritto* (fried fish), the Puritan's martial recommendation, "Suoni la tromba;" or, mingled with the cries of "Wine! wine! excellent wine! Who'll drink?" the Traviata's sickly farewell to life and all its pleasures, "Addio del passato, &c., &c.," uttered in a voice calculated to reassure the friends of its owner as to the condition of his lungs, notwithstanding his roared-out assertion that he is fading and dying like a withered flower!

Great torches flare and sputter on the booths. Here and there a lantern dimly illumines some group of itinerant musicians. But, on the whole, the assembly trusts mainly to the stars for light. There is no moon. She is but a thin pale strip of curved silver now, and has sunk to rest long ago. The church clocks chime out midnight, with jangling strokes that seem to jostle each other in the air. And now the fun is fast and furious.

Away from the booths and the lights

wander many a pair of lovers over the grass, and for them the old, old glamour softens all sights and sounds into sweet enchantment. What is it to them that the vendors roar themselves hoarse in vaunting their wares, that the instruments are tuneless, harsh, and moved by unskilled hands, and that the odours of fried fish and garlic pollute the pure night breezes? Poetry dwells within us, and not in external things alone. And Pietro and Giovanna are conscious only of being wafted along in a sweet love-dream, on the outer edges of which a rude throng may rave and roar, but where it cannot enter.

Fat shop-keepers of the lower class, humble tavern-keepers (who have a barrel of good wine somewhere in their cellar, trust me, whatever mixture they may dole out to their customers!) dealers in sausages and tunny fish soaked in oil, with their stout wives and smart daughters, sit upon the coarse herbage, and sup heartily on the contents of sundry bundles and baskets, carefully carried from the little dark home in some winding narrow Roman alley. There is the bachelor artisan, insolent in youth and health, dandified, with a crimson sash girt tightly round his loins, a pair of buff-coloured shoes neatly fitting his slender Italian feet, and a crushed wide-awake hat stuck jauntily on the nape of his neck, casting critical and admiring glances on Marietta and Giulia, and debating with himself which of those damsels he shall honour with his hand in the next tarantella. There is his married comrade, a year or two older, several years more thoughtful, with a little line of anxious calculation between his eye-brows; but smiling—he, too, dressed in his best, and regarding with unconcealed pride and exultation the waddling efforts of his first-born, whom he leads by the hand, to walk on his fat brown legs. While his wife—once as nimble at a tarantella as any of the Giulias and Mariettas of to-night—follows with a baby at her bosom, and a beam in her honest motherly eyes which it is good and wholesome to look at. There are old *contadini* from the Campagna, leaning on their stout staves, and watching the dancing, who all agree in the discouraging opinion that the young fellows are neither so brisk nor so active as they were in *their* day, and that the tarantellas are no longer what they used to be.

On the skirts of the crowd are ranged row upon row of carriages filled with spectators. These are, broadly speaking, all Romans: from the portly Principe and Principessa in their heavy, old-fashioned carriage, to the five government impiegati crammed into a hack cab constructed to hold two, and smoking their cheap cigars with an air of elegant nonchalance. Up to the sweet silent sky rises a roar of mingled sounds, growing ever louder and wilder. The dancers tear round and round. The music eddies about in headlong rushes, wherein time and tune are lost. Drink and excitement are doing their work. Here and there blows are exchanged, curses are heard; and, see—was not that the glitter of a knife in the torchlight?

It is nearly two o'clock, and the decent part of the crowd begins to betake itself homeward. The vast space is growing more sparsely populated every minute. The dealers pack up their booths, carrying away empty baskets and barrels, and full purses. On the grassy plain figures are seen stretched in every variety of attitude, as they have flung themselves down to sleep off the fumes of the strong red wine. The snatches of song, roared out in inebriated tones, are no longer merely ludicrous, but have come to be gross and indecent. The few dances which still go on, are mere wild rompings. Those drunkards who are not profoundly slumbering on the grass are gyrating unsteadily in the vain attempt to find the point of the compass where their homes lie. One man, in a condition of solemn intoxication, has dropped his hat, and stands swaying backwards and forwards, contemplating it as it lies on the ground, with a countenance of reproachful gravity. At length he is heard to address the following profound observation to his battered wide-awake:—

"If I pick you up, I tumble down; but if I tumble down, *you won't pick me up!*"

With which moving speech he staggers away, leaving the unfaithful hat to shift for itself on the now almost deserted piazza.

And now a faint, faint streak of palest yellow lengthens on the Eastern horizon. Birds chirp, half asleep, from their nests in the nooks and crevices of the ancient basilica of St. John. A little morning breeze goes shivering along the dry herbage, all strewn with squalid remnants of the feast. Suddenly, from the campanile of the church sound the bells, calling the faithful to early mass. The Day of St.

John has begun, and the remnant of last night's merry-makers, roused by the sound and the light, rub their heavy eyes, and stumble homeward, blinking like bats in the sunshine.

"LES GANTS GLACÉS."

(AN ANECDOTE OF THE FRONDE, 1650.)

WRAPPED in smoke stood the towers of Rethel,
The battle surged fierce by the town,
On terror, and struggle, and turmoil,
The sweet skies of Champagne looked down.
Far away smiled the beautiful uplands,
The blue Vosges lay solemn beyond;
Well France knew such discord of colour,
In the terrible days of the Fronde.

At the breach in the ramparts of Rethel
Each stone was bought dearly by blood,
For De Raslin was leading the stormers,
And Turenne on the battlements stood.
Again and again closed the conflict,
The madness of strife upon all.
Right well fought the ranks of the marshal,
Yet twice they fell back from the wall.

Twice, thrice, repulsed, baffled, and beaten,
They glared, where in gallant array,
Brave in gilding, and 'broidery, and feather,
The Guards, in reserve, watched the fray.
"En avant les gants glacés!" they shouted,
As sullenly rearward they bore,
The gaps deep and wide in their columns,
The lilies all dripping in gore.

"En avant les gants glacés!" and laughing
At the challenge, the Household Brigade
Dressed ranks, floated standards, blew trumpets,
And flashed out each glittering blade;
And carelessly, as to a banquet,
And joyously, as to a dance,
Where the Frondeurs in triumph were gathered,
Went the best blood of Scotland and France.

The gay plumes were shorn as in tempest,
The gay scarves stained crimson and black,
Storm of bullet and broadsword closed o'er them,
Yet never one proud foot turned back.
Though half of their number lay silent,
On the breach their last effort had won.
King Louis was master of Rethel
Ere the day and its story was done.

And the fierce taunting cry grew a proverb,
Ere revolt and its horrors were past;
For men knew, ere o'er France's fair valleys,
Peace waved her white banner at last,
That the softest of tones in the boudoir,
The lightest of steps in the "ronde,"
Was theirs, whose keen swords bit the deepest
In the terrible days of the Fronde.

OLD FIGHTING SHIPS.

THE "OLD TEMERAIRE" AND THE VENERABLE.

It was during the short peace of Amiens that Bonaparte, distrustful of our long sheathing the sword, prepared seriously for the invasion of England when war should be renewed. His plans for this purpose were as grand as those of the Cæsars. He encamped a hundred thousand men on the chalky heights of Ambleteuse, and collected a vast fleet of gun-brigs, praams, and horse-transport boats at Boulogne—a place

where the restless conqueror of Europe had resolved to make a great harbour. France had no great natural ports, except the artificially-made one of Cherbourg, which was still incomplete. Toulon was small; Brest dangerous for large vessels; Rochefort and L'Orient, shoal and narrow; while, as all eminent writers on naval matters allow, in all that long roll of blue water—from Ushant to Dunkirk—there is no port of safety for any vessel of more than four hundred tons.

The great European confederacy against England had crumbled to pieces. Nelson, at Copenhagen, had humbled Denmark. The murder of that cruel madman, the Emperor Paul, had lost Russia to France, for Alexander was like his nation, anti-Gallic, and there was no hope of humbling that Carthage—England—but by providing a safe port from whence the grenadiers of Marengo could be poured into our intractable island.

It was just before the Treaty of Amiens that we first hear of that tough son of Neptune, the "Old Temeraire," originally a capture from the French. When we catch the first glimpse of her from the mast-head she is emerging from a white squall. It was when peace was ripening—but the diplomatic preliminaries were not yet signed—that discontent broke out in our fleet, and more especially on board the Temeraire, the flag-ship of Admiral Campbell. The causes of discontent were these: Nelson's attack on the Boulogne flotilla had proved that even genius may sometimes fail, and Napoleon's Admiral Gantheaume had slipped out of Brest with his fleet, and gone, as it was supposed, to attack San Domingo. Earl St. Vincent had instantly let fly his sea-hawks in pursuit, and Sir Robert Calder was scouring the West India seas in search of his swift-winged enemies.

The Channel Fleet was at this time divided into several squadrons—one watchful at Ushant, another wary at Torbay, a third discontented at Bantry Bay, under Rear-Admiral Campbell. All at once, as the sailors of this squadron (especially those of the Temeraire) were expecting release after eight or nine years' hard and dangerous service, and longing for service and freedom in the merchant service, for cans of flip and Poll-of-Portsmouth's society, a sudden and stern order from Earl St. Vincent had come to the Bay, ordering them off to Barbadoes, as soon as the anchors could

be slipped. Some of the officers being heard to grumble, saying that they would not serve in the West Indies in time of peace, this roused the already discontented sailors, who swore point blank, when the signal went up for sailing, that they would not go. Admiral Campbell acted promptly on board his flag-ship, the Temeraire. He and his officers at once handcuffed the ringleaders, put them under hatches, restored order by threats and promises among the rest, and instantly sailed for Spithead, to report progress and have the offenders tried.

Those slavish days of press-gangs and the boatswain's lash were no times for mercy. Sixteen brave seamen were put upon their trial, and six of the ringleaders hung to the yard-arm. Immediately after this stern lesson Admiral Campbell's squadron sailed for Barbadoes before fresh troubles could spring up.

The Temeraire's first laurel wreath was won on a noble field, and was a victory indeed. The story, however, requires to be prefaced by a few notes to remind our readers of the memorable events that had preceded that crushing victory. In 1802-3, the indefatigable Nelson had traversed six thousand six hundred and eighty-six miles of blue water in search of Villeneuve's fleet. For two years, less only ten days, he had never set foot out of the Victory. Worn out with fatigue and vexation he at last returned to Spithead. He had scarcely kissed the fair syren who bewitched him, when news came to his quiet retirement at Merton that Villeneuve, having refitted his fleet at Vigo and Ferrol, had arrived safe at Cadiz. The Victory was at once prepared, and Nelson's luggage (and his coffin, made from the mast of the L'Orient), put on board. The fine fleet, with which he sailed forth from Portsmouth on the 14th of September, 1805, prepared to "do or die," amounted to twenty-seven sail of the line. To his friend Collingwood the true hero wrote with generous ardour and patriotism, "We can, my dear Coll., have no trifling jealousies. We have only one great object in view—that of annihilating our enemies and getting a glorious peace for our country. No man has more confidence in another than I have in you, and no man will render your services more justice than your very old friend, NELSON AND BRONTE."

Nelson's preparations were cool and business-like. The transports were filled with empty wine-pipes, hoops, staves,

and condemned provisions from all the squadrons. Instead of red, white, and blue flags for the three divisions of the fleet, Nelson, for greater contrast with the enemy, ordered all his ships to fight under a St. George's ensign, and to hoist union jacks at the foretopmast and top-gallant stays. The French and Spaniards painting the hoops round their masts black, Nelson painted his yellow. In case of any failure of signals, Nelson's captains were told at Cadiz, as a simple and changeless rule, that no one could do wrong who placed his ship alongside that of an enemy, and fought till he killed or conquered.

Villeneuve at last, learning that Nelson had sent off five of his vessels to escort a convoy from Gibraltar to Malta, and, ignorant of the fact that Nelson had just been reinforced by five other vessels, ventured out from Cadiz one fine evening with thirty-six vessels (thirty sail of the line, four frigates, two brigs). The English fleet comprised twenty-seven sail of the line (seven three-deckers, three sixty-fours) and four frigates.

The fleets joined battle on the 21st of October, at thirty minutes past eleven. At the intercession of Captain (afterwards the Honourable Sir Henry) Blackwood, Nelson had given the Temeraire permission to lead the weather-line, followed by the Leviathan; but neither of these ships could pass Nelson, who would not shorten sail. The Temeraire (ninety-eight)—taken at the battle of the Nile—was commanded by Captain Eliab Harvey (afterwards Admiral Harvey), a brave officer, who had served with Lord Howe on the North American coast, and had afterwards distinguished himself at the reduction of Martinique and Guadaloupe in 1794. Nelson pushed straight at Villeneuve's double row with two lines like the horns of a bull. The Victory was steered straight, through a raking fire, for the bow of the Santissima Trinidad—a huge Spanish four decker. Unable to break the line without running on board a French ship, the Victory grappled with the Redoubtable (whose tops were filled with riflemen), and was received with a broadside, the French instantly closing their lower-deck ports, for fear of the boarders, and firing no more great guns during the whole action. The Temeraire then, like a staunch comrade, fell on board the Redoubtable on the other side. A second French ship was, in like manner, on board the Temeraire, so that the four vessels lay as

if moored in dock, their heads all pointing the same way. The lieutenants of the Victory, seeing this, depressed their middle and lower-deck guns, and fired with a diminished charge, for fear the shot should pass through the Redoubtable and pierce the Temeraire.

In this great fight with two antagonists, the Temeraire lost forty-seven men, and had seventy-six wounded. In this great battle of Trafalgar, that shattered for ever Napoleon's hopes of naval supremacy, nineteen Spanish and French sail of the line were taken or destroyed, and our loss was four hundred and twenty-three officers and men killed, and eleven hundred and fifty-four wounded.

In 1839, our great English painter, Turner, who passionately loved the sea, exhibited at the Royal Academy his fine picture of "The Fighting Temeraire" being towed to her last moorings. The subject was suggested to the painter by Stanfield. In 1838 Turner was with Stanfield and a party of brother artists on one of those holiday excursions in which he so delighted, probably to end with whitebait and champagne at Greenwich. It was at those times Turner talked and joked his best, snatching now and then a moment to print on his quick brain some tone of sky, some gleam of water, some sprinkling light of oar, some glowing sunshine cross-barring a sail. Suddenly there moved down upon the artist's boat the grand old vessel that had been taken prisoner at the Nile, and that led the van at Trafalgar; she loomed pale and ghostly, and was being towed to her last moorings at Deptford by a little fiery steam-tug.

"There's a fine subject, Turner," said Stanfield. So Turner went home and painted it, and it proved one of his most poetical pictures.

It is said that when Turner was obliged to give the correct name of the ship to the engraver, he almost shed tears at having to change the name of his picture to "The Old Temeraire." Mr. Ruskin considers this picture as the last of Turner's, executed with the painter's entire and perfect power.

When the old Temeraire left Plymouth for her last cruise, the officers and men in the dockyard gave her three cheers at parting—cheers of gratitude and regret. At Deptford she was to cease to be a ship, and to become a hospital hulk for the sailors of all nations. "Turner looked at her," says the author of his life, "not as

his old friend going to the grave, but as an old warrior going to his rest; to celebrate its grand apotheosis, he transformed the sky and earth into a gory battle-field, and in gorgeous crimson sunset she moves in pomp to her burial. In Turner's eyes she was then no longer the pale ghost of her former self, but a war ship moving through the sulphurous flame at Trafalgar, with the blood oozing through her planks as the wine pours from the wine-press at vintage-time. He knew, when he painted this picture, that he should touch the heart of England, because his own heart beat faster as he painted."

And now, moving from victory to victory, we turn to the deeds of the Venerable (seventy-four)—that fine old man-of-war that bore Duncan's flag at Camperdown. In 1796, Duncan, who had served with distinction under Keppel and Rodney, held the command of our North-Sea station, his limits extending from the South Foreland to Shetland, and from Calais to an indefinite distance in Norway—a radius worthy of the Queen of the Seas. Duncan commanded a squadron of sixty to seventy sail. Our gallant Admiral's special post was a "hot corner" with us—the mouth of the Texel, watching for the Gallo-Batavian fleet. The mutiny in the English fleet for advance of wages, ending in 1797 with the very serious one at the Nore, had given the Dutch hopes that they might, perhaps, defeat our low-manned ships, though our mutinous sailors had all declared that if the enemy put to sea they would out at once and fight them, and then return into port and renew their complaints. Our Admiral's ship, the Venerable, had indeed been mixed up in the Nore mutiny, but had been quick to return to better courses.

The French Government was just then planning an invasion of Ireland, and the Dutch Texel fleet was intended to make a powerful diversion at sea. Our ships were of poor quality, with the exception of the Venerable and two or three vessels that joined Duncan from Portsmouth a few days previous to the battle, but it is just to allow that the Dutch ships were clumsy and slow, foul with long lying in harbour, while the crews were raw and awkward, and the officers, though brave, unskilful.

On October 9th, 1797, the master of a cutter brought news to Duncan, who was taking in provisions at Yarmouth, that the Dutch had put to sea. At eleven a.m.

on the 11th, the Admiral obtained a sight of the enemy forming in line on the larboard tack—the wind at N.W. The sandy line between Camperdown and Egmont was seen about nine miles to leeward of the enemy. The Admiral did not wait to mature a theory, scheme, or plan, but at once sent aloft a signal to the ready fleet to bear up, break their line, and engage to leeward every one his man. The vessels at once got between the enemy and dry land, and fell to work hot and fast. Vice-Admiral Onslow in the *Monarch* was the first to bear down on the enemy's rear, his division followed as hounds do their leader, and the action commenced "hammer and tongs" about forty minutes past noon. The Dutch, from the moment they had caught sight of us, had been sidling back towards Holland, so the battle took place in nine fathoms water off the sand-hills of Camperdown, say about three leagues from the land. The wind was dead on the land, or west-north-west, and it was dangerous to get nearer the enemy's shore. Onslow made a gallant fight of it in the *Monarch*, and soon made the Dutch Vice-Admiral's flagship, the *Jupiter*, lower her mast and strike her colours. As for Duncan, he stuck with a bull-dog's hold to the Dutch Admiral, and swept the flagship, the *Vreyheid* (Freedom), seventy-four, with storms of fire. In first moving down to her, Duncan was stopped by the *States General*, a fine Dutch ship of seventy-six guns, but the Venerable soon silenced her, and drove her out of the line just as a schoolboy's taw tangents a meaner marble, and on went the Venerable in her angry majesty full tilt at the big Dutchman.

The fight lasted pell mell for two hours, till the Dutch ship had all her masts gone by the board, her sides riddled like a cullender, the decks strewn with bodies, and the scuppers spouting blood. All the vessels on both sides, with the exception of two or three cautious laggards, had by this time joined in the *melée* in which the Dutch were so fairly beaten. About the time the *Jupiter* threw down her arms, many of the other Dutch vessels struck. Brave Captain Burges, who brought the *Ardent* (sixty-four) gallantly into action, was killed soon after the engagement commenced, and the command of the ship was taken by Lieutenant Phillips, who continued the fighting with the utmost intrepidity.

Of the Dutch fleet we took the *Jupiter* (afterwards the *Camperdown*), (seventy-

four), the Haerlem (sixty-eight), the Admiral Devries (sixty-eight), the Gelykheid (sixty-eight), the Warendor (sixty-four), the Hercules (sixty-four), and the Delft (fifty-six). The Munikendam was lost not long afterwards, and the Ambuscade was driven on the coast of Holland, but soon after recaptured. The States-General (seventy-four), the Brutus (seventy-four), the Daphne brig (eighteen), the Atalanta (eighteen), the Ajax (eighteen), the Haasje (sixteen), took advantage of the night, stole away, and being near their own coast, hid ingloriously in the Texel. The Cerberus (eighteen), the Leyden (sixty-eight), the Bescherm (fifty-four), the Batavier (fifty-four), the Mars (forty-four), the Helder (thirty-two), the Minerva (twenty-four), the Waaksamheid (twenty-six), and the Galathee (sixteen), were soon afterwards captured. In the waves off Camperdown on that October day, 1797, sank the naval crown of the Dutch; for only four or five vessels escaped with Admiral Story. Thus with twenty-four ships and eleven hundred and ninety-eight guns, we beat twenty-six Dutch ships with twelve hundred and fifty-five guns. Our loss amounted to two hundred and three killed and five hundred and thirty-nine wounded. The Dutch suffered heavily, no fewer than five hundred men being killed in the two flag ships alone. The vessels in our fleet that bore the brunt of the action were the Venerable, the Monarch, the Bedford, the Isis, the Ardent, the Belliqueux, the Lancaster, the Powerful, and the Triumph. The Monarch had one hundred and thirty-six men and the Ardent one hundred and forty-eight killed and wounded. One or two of our vessels fought rather shy of the warm spots, and had no one killed or injured. Captain Williamson, of the Agincourt (sixty-four), was tried by court martial on his return for this untimely display of a retiring disposition. He was sentenced to be dismissed from his command, and to be placed at the bottom of the list of post-captains. His death was reported shortly afterwards, but it was generally believed that he changed his name, and received his half-pay many years longer.

The Delft, one of the ships taken, was in so shattered a state, that after the greatest exertion for five days to keep her from sinking, all hope of saving her was given up. The English prize-officer called aside Mr. Hieberg, who had been first

Lieutenant of the Delft, and who remained on board with the sick and wounded prisoners who were not in a condition to be removed, and represented that it was impossible to save all; that he intended, at a certain signal, to throw himself, with his men, into the long-boat; and he invited Hieberg to do the same.

"What!" exclaimed Hieberg, "and leave these unfortunate men!" pointing to his wounded countrymen, who it had been necessary to bring on deck, as the hold was already full of water,—"No, no; go, and leave us to perish together."

The English officer, affected by the generosity of Hieberg's answer, replied, "God bless you, my brave fellow! Here is my hand; I give you my word I will stay with you." He then caused his own men to leave the ship, and remained himself behind to assist the Dutch. The Russell soon sent her boats to their assistance, which brought off as many as could leap on board of them. The Delft was now cleared of all but Hieberg and the English officer, with three Dutch subalterns, and about thirty seamen, most of them so ill from their wounds as to be unable to move. While still cherishing a hope that the boats would come a third time, the fatal moment arrived, and on a sudden the Delft gave a gulp and went down. The English officer sprang into the sea and swam to his own ship: but the unfortunate Hieberg perished, a victim of his courage and humanity.

It was in this glorious action that the following instances of daring bravery occurred among the many which so nobly distinguished the character of the British tar. During the time the Venerable was closely engaged with the Vreghied, the flag halliards of the former were shot away; a young man, named John Crawford, instantly ascended the mast to again hoist the colours; and to prevent a recurrence of a similar accident, he actually nailed the flag to the maintop-gallant mast-head, declaring that it should not come down again but with the mast!

This intrepid youth was a native of Sunderland, which town prepared a medal at its own expense and presented it to him for his heroic conduct on this occasion.

A marine, of the name of Covey, was carried down to the cockpit, deprived of both his legs; and it was necessary, some hours after, to amputate still higher. "I suppose," said Covey, "those scissors will

finish the business of the bullet, Master Mate?" "Indeed, my brave fellow," cried the surgeon, "there is some fear of it." "Well, never mind," said Covey, "I've lost my legs, to be sure, and, mayhap, lose my life; but we beat the Dutch, my boy!—we've beat the Dutch! This blessed day my legs has been shot off, so I'll have another cheer for it. Huzza! huzza!" Covey recovered, and became cook of one of the ships in ordinary at Portsmouth, where he died in the year 1805.

During the battle there were several women on board the Venerable, the English admiral's flag-ship. Amongst these a sailor's-wife was shot by the side of her husband, whom she was assisting at his gun. Another young woman had the lantern-bottle shot from her hand while she was holding it for the surgeon to dress the wounds of her father; and, perceiving him look terrified, she ran to him, and cried, "If you have not received any more hurt, never mind the lantern. I am safe and sound, thank God! But how are you? Oh! father, how are you?"

After the capture of the fleet, as the Dutch admiral was ascending the side of the Venerable, to do homage to the British conqueror, a sailor, who had been on the watch some time, no sooner saw De Winter mounting the vessel than he eagerly thrust his hand from an open port-hole, and exclaimed, "Mynheer Admiral, we have been long on the look-out for you, and I am glad to see you, by—. You will be kindly received on the quarter-deck, and so you ought to be, for you fought us like a trump, and knocked us about like nine-pins, for which I hope you will let me be the first to shake your honour's hand." De Winter presented his hand, and the blunt English sailor received it respectfully.

Lord Duncan's reception of his brave captive was courteous and generous. He stood ready at the side of the ship to offer him the embrace of a generous victor, fully sensible of the bravery of the vanquished. De Winter was much affected, and, with deep emotion, exclaimed, "O admiral! you see before you the only Dutch naval commander ever taken alive; but why should I droop? A thousand open mouths of my ship, and of yours, also, bear witness and will all speak for me. They will certify that I did not quit my vessel till she was a wreck."

De Winter behaved nobly, and was the

only person on board his ship who was not either killed or wounded. When he presented his sword, Admiral Duncan gallantly returned it to him with as gallant a compliment. When the two admirals were seen together, it was universally acknowledged that they were the finest-looking men in both fleets. After the duties of the day were all done, these brave fellows dined together in the most amicable manner, and concluded the evening by playing a friendly rubber of whist!

Our gallant admiral's address to the officers of his fleet, when they came on board his ship for final instructions, previous to this memorable engagement, was couched in the following laconic and humorous manner:—"Gentlemen of my fleet, you see a very severe Winter fast approaching; and I have only to advise you to keep up a good fire!"

For their meritorious conduct in this engagement, Admiral Duncan, his officers, and seamen, received the thanks of both houses of Parliament. The admiral was honoured by his Majesty with the dignity of a Viscount of Great Britain and a pension of three thousand pounds per annum, for his public services. Vice-Admiral Onslow was created a baronet. The city of London presented Admiral Duncan with its freedom, and a sword of the value of two hundred guineas; and to Vice-Admiral Onslow the freedom, with a sword of the value of one hundred guineas. His Majesty went in state to St. Paul's Cathedral, to return thanks for the victory, and to deposit there the flags taken on that and other eminent occasions, Lord Duncan carrying the one he had taken in person.

Captains Trollope and William George Fairfax, of the Venerable, were for this victory created by King George knights bannerets. The Dutch Vice-Admiral, Rentjies, who was taken prisoner at the action, died shortly afterwards in England of his wounds.

In 1813 the old Venerable again showed her mettle. She was commanded by Rear-Admiral (afterwards Sir) P. H. C. Durham, and was on her way to Barbadoes, in company with the Cyane, a twenty-four gun sloop, when she fell in with the Alceme (forty-four) and the Iphigenie (forty-four) two French frigates. The two Frenchmen had agreed to lay the perfidious English line-of-battle-ship on board at the same moment, but, unfortu-

nately, while the Alcmena's courage rose on being overtaken, the Iphigenie's courage sank. Captain Worth, of the Venerable, the instant his helm was put up, threw a hundred men on board the Alcmena, cutlass in hand, and they soon settled the matter by hauling down the tricolor—killing thirty-two Frenchmen, and wounding fifty others. After a chase of nineteen hours, our admiral also came up with and captured the faithless Iphigenie. Both were new ships, victualled for six months, and fresh from Cherbourg.

YOUNG MR. NIGHTINGALE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "ROBSON'S CHOICE," ETC.

CHAPTER LVII. TEA WITH AN ACTRESS.

ROSETTA lodged in the house of a carver and gilder, who dealt also in pictures. The rooms she occupied on the first floor were comfortably furnished, although they were rather an untidy air. A bonnet and a parasol were deposited upon the cheffonier; there was a hair-brush upon the mantelpiece, amid a litter of soiled gloves, laces, scraps of paper, ribbons, and other odds and ends. The chairs were much occupied by parcels, handboxes, and articles of dress. A handsome shawl, hurriedly discarded, apparently, rested half upon the sofa, and half streaming down upon the floor. There were slippers within the fender, and a pair of clogs under the table. Allowing for the feminine character of the majority of these objects, the apartment had about it, I thought, rather the disordered and neglected look of a young bachelor's abode.

The fumes of an early dinner of a succulent and highly-seasoned kind—roast pork, I decided—were very present in the house.

I was heartily greeted by Rosetta. "My Duke! How pleased I am to see you!"

She wore a closely-fitting dark merino dress, which displayed her rounded symmetrical figure to advantage. Her hair was somewhat disarranged, thrust from her face in tangled masses; but its variegated richness of colour, its light auburn about her temples and brow, and the many threads of gold that were intertwined in its cables of deep brown, were perhaps best exhibited in that way. I was duly introduced to Mrs. Bembridge; a stout old lady in a lace cap trimmed with scarlet ribbons—which relieved the high suffused colour of

her face. She was sitting near the open window reading a Sunday newspaper, through tortoiseshell rimmed spectacles. She had rather fierce eyes, with heavy black eyebrows.

"I'm glad to see you. You're a good young man, I'm told, and what a comfort that is to think of. There's not too many of 'em about, that I can see. Find a chair, if you can. Rosy, my dear, your rubbish is all over the place."

Mrs. Bembridge gave me her hand; it was small, soft and white—she was proud of it, I think. There were many rings upon her fingers. Rosetta's hand was shapely, but large, with rather a manly hardness about its palm. There was a decanter of sherry on the table, with wine-glasses and a plateful of filberts. These Rosetta cracked readily with her strong white teeth, throwing the husks out of the window. Mrs. Bembridge preferred to use nutcrackers, I noticed. Time had perhaps unfurnished her mouth, although the dentist had apparently refitted it, handsomely enough. But his handiwork could scarcely be applied to such a violent exercise as nutcracking.

"My dear, the stuff they put in the papers!" exclaimed Mrs. Bembridge. "You never read such nonsense. There's a fellow here telling me how I ought to play Mrs. Malaprop—as though I wasn't the best judge of that, at my time of life. Why, I'll warrant I played Mrs. Malaprop before this creature was short-coated. If you ever want to find where the people are who teach their grandmothers to suck eggs, I'll tell you where to look for them—in the newspaper offices. I've no patience with the man: setting me right about Mrs. Malaprop—a likely thing indeed!"

I soon gathered that there had been a representation of *The Rivals* on the previous night, and that the journal Mrs. Bembridge had been reading contained some adverse comments upon her performance in that comedy.

"What does it matter, mother?" asked Rosetta. "Don't be cross."

"It doesn't matter, Rosy. What does anything matter? And I'm not cross, as it happens. Only these things put me out of temper. They'd put you out, too; only you know the writer has loaded you with praise. He can't find words good enough for you. You're perfection, and something more, it seems. What a thing it is to be young, and to have bright eyes!

But there'll be faults enough found with you, before you've lived to be my age, never fear, Rosy. Come, ring the bell—I'm dying for a cup of tea. And so is your young friend here, I dare say; Mr. —, I forget the name, though you've told it me often enough. Ah! Nightingale—thank you. There was a Nightingale, some years back, I remember, who used to play juvenile tragedy at York—a gentlemanly young fellow enough—but I don't suppose he was any relation of yours. And, by-the-bye, if he's still living, that Nightingale must be an oldish man by this time. For it's an age ago, now I come to think of it."

"My Duke's relation is the famous Sir George Nightingale," said Rosetta, busy over the tea-cups.

"To be sure. I remember now. I've seen the name often enough in the print-shops; and I've seen Sir George too, though I didn't know who he was for a long time, and wondered what business he had in the Green Room. He didn't come to paint my portrait, it seemed. I call Sir George a handsome man."

"I should think he was a handsome man," said Rosetta. "My dear, his eyes look one through and through; and what a smile he has! I love Sir George."

"Don't talk nonsense, Rosy; and pour out the tea, or you'll have the second cups as weak as weak."

"But I mean it. That is, I mean——"

"You don't know what you mean. You never did."

"I mean that if I were ever to love any one—which isn't likely, perhaps—it would be a man like Sir George, as near as could be. I don't suppose there's quite such another in the world. I'm half afraid of him at times. And somehow I think a little fear is a good thing in love. It keeps love in order, you see; compels one to keep watch over oneself and to behave one's best. I'm always in terror lest I should offend him, and I wouldn't do that for the world. I feel that at a harsh word or look from him I should shrink abashed into my shoes. If I were to offend him I should never forgive myself. That's odd, isn't it, mother?"

"I don't know about it's being odd. I call it foolish."

"Because you know I don't feel that with any one else. As a rule I don't care what I say or do. But it's different with Sir George. Am I afraid of him because I love him? or do I love him because I'm afraid of him? Which, do you think?"

Well, I won't say love, as you seem to object to the word."

"I think your conversation's absurd and improper."

"I'll say like. Come that can't be absurd or improper; for I like you, you know, mother, and Duke here, too, of course—my dear old Duke. That can't be wrong, surely. And I don't care what I say to you, either of you. But it's different with Sir George, as I said before. Not but what he's very kind to me. He makes allowances for me, without, I think, despising me; at least, without despising me very much. He looks down upon me, of course, in his grand way; but yet he is gracious too. He lets me chatter on, and sometimes I almost, but never quite, forget whom I'm talking to. I amuse him, I suppose. It must be new to him to have an odd flighty creature like me chattering about his studio, instead of the superfine lords and ladies he's usually painting. I'm only an actress, paid so much a week to exhibit on the stage. An actress to-day. I was a rope dancer yesterday. I don't forget that. I know it and he knows it. For I told him of it. If he were to despise me for it, he'd despise me less, perhaps, for telling the truth about it. I amuse him, and I like, I take pains to amuse him. I'm rewarded when he smiles, and I often make him smile. There may be a trifle of contempt about his smile; but it isn't all contempt. And to my thinking he's handsomer than ever when he smiles. It's strange how with a look he can set my heart beating ever so quickly. I'm talking nonsense now, mother, I own."

"Then leave off, for Heaven's sake."

"No, I'll go on. Now that I'm sure it's nonsense. For, in that case, there can't be any harm in it, can there? I'm nothing to him; I know that. I'm only a model it suits him to paint from. Perhaps any girl with hair and eyes and complexion like mine would do just as well for him. Only I don't quite think so; I don't like to think so, that's the truth. One doesn't like to think that there's a lot of people about in the world who would do just as well as oneself. Perhaps I am just a little different to the rest, and he's found that out, and so— No, of course I'm nothing to him. And he's nothing to me, or he should be nothing. Only he isn't. And I'd go to him from the world's end if he wanted me to sit to him, if I could be ever so little useful to him. I've miss'd rehearsal to go to him, and I've been fined for it. But he

doesn't know that. And he says my portrait is the best he ever painted, and that it will make us both famous. Both! Think of our being put together like that. But he only said it to please me, likely enough. He's a kind man, only his heart is packed away rather out of reach somehow. I suppose he knows where it is to be found. I don't. Is he well, Duke, your cousin, or uncle, or whatever you call him?"

I was unable to give a very good account of Sir George's health.

"He's ill—that's what you mean. I was sure of it. There's something strange come over him of late. Is he unhappy, do you think? But he can't be—so rich and famous as he is. Why has he never married, I wonder? Has he never loved? But you can't know, of course. Women enough have loved him, I'm sure. He's ill—now he's pale, and now there comes a patch of scarlet on his cheek. And at times his hand trembles very much, and the colour flies from his lips; and his eyes—how strangely they glisten! There, mother, I'll say no more. But when I get talking about Sir George, I never know when to finish."

"You'll excuse her, Mr. Nightingale. She's in one of her madcap humours to-day—although it's Sunday, worse luck."

"Sunday; so it is. Well, I don't act and I never look at a part on Sunday. I'm entitled to appear in my own character, therefore, however crazy it may be. And it is rather crazy, all things considered, isn't it, Duke? You found that out for yourself, didn't you, ever so long ago? Do you like thin bread and butter, or thick? I never tasted butter when I was Diavolo's pupil. I was thankful to get lard—and sometimes—my! what a treat a penn'orth of treacle was! Now, here's every luxury: strawberry jam, and watercresses and shrimps. You'll have shrimps, mother, I know. There's a cold knuckle of ham in the house if any one's particularly hungry. I'm rather in the humour to make a good tea myself. Have another lump of sugar, Duke? Is your tea to your liking, mother?"

"The tea might be better; but it will do. And if you could only sit still and hold your tongue, Rosy, for a little, we should all get on very comfortably together, I dare say."

They both talked, I thought, needlessly loud. I had forgotten that they were in the habit of addressing themselves to large audiences. There was something of the

manner of the stage, too, in the liveliness of their gestures. Mrs. Bembridge possessed a deep strong voice, and spoke with much decision, articulating her words very distinctly, moving her black eyebrows up and down the while, and waving to and fro her small white hands. She emptied many cups of tea and a plateful of shrimps. Rosetta ate with hearty appetite several thick slices of bread liberally coated with jam.

"I'm wonderfully fond of jam," she confessed. "The worst of it is, it makes one's fingers so sticky. I'm afraid you'll think me very greedy and vulgar, Duke."

I disclaimed such an opinion. She was perfectly simple and natural; could she, therefore, be fairly chargeable with vulgarity? To myself, however, I admitted that she was somewhat unrefined in manner. A little while ago I should not, perhaps, have perceived this. I should have rejected the notion of such a thing being possible; but it was clear to me now. She had not changed; but, somehow, my point of view had shifted. I contemplated her now with different eyes. They had studied other objects.

"Of what are you thinking, Duke? Why do you look so grave? Do my flighty ways seem so very strange to you? I'm what you see me to be. Don't think me worse than I am."

She paused for a moment, while her bright, steady gaze searched my face.

"Do you know," she said, presently, "that every now and then you've an odd look of Sir George? I like you for yourself, and I like you still more for that."

Mrs. Bembridge shrugged her shoulders. She disapproved of this persistent harping upon Sir George. I accounted it a mere idle whim of Rosetta's—a freak—without much real meaning. Her manner of speaking was always somewhat breathless and headlong. She gave her thoughts words, on the instant—almost before they were distinctly formed. Her mind was in a state of fermentation; and this subject of Sir George was for ever bubbling to the surface.

"He gave me this chain. Wasn't it kind of him? I shall always prize it for his sake." She showed me a rich gold chain coiled many times round her white neck.

"When Rosy gets 'the talks' on there's no stopping her—and there's no knowing what she'll say, and what she won't say. Haven't we had enough of Sir George for to-night, at any rate?"

Rosetta sighed, stirring her spoon in an empty cup, meditatively.

Presently we were discussing theatrical topics—the triumphs that the future had in store for Rosetta; the past successes and the experiences generally of Mrs. Bembridge. I was an entertained and sympathetic auditor.

We were disturbed by a loud knocking at the street door.

CHAPTER LVII. ROSETTA'S CONFESSIONS.

ROSETTA and Mrs. Bembridge started and looked significantly at each other.

"I cannot see him," said Rosetta, rather faintly, "if it's—you know who!"

"Of course it is. You'd better let me go."

"If you would, mother." Mrs. Bembridge rose, smoothed her skirts and left the room with rather a determined air.

"It does seem strange that you should be here, Duke; you who know so much of my life—though you don't know all. We were but boy and girl when we first met; what a while ago it seems! I'm a woman, now, famous and envied, so people tell me. But I'm not much to be envied when all's said. Knowing what you know, you can think more kindly of me than the others can. Or if you blame me, you'll not blame me so harshly as they would, perhaps."

She was speaking in a sad, soft, musing tone, as she leant forward, pressing her hands upon her forehead. After a few minutes Mrs. Bembridge re-appeared, with a flush of anger upon her face.

"The old story," she said curtly.

"Is he sober?"

"Need you ask?"

Rosetta sighed, went to her desk, which stood on the cheffonier, took from it a scrap of folded paper—a bank note, I felt sure—which she handed to Mrs. Bembridge.

"It's too bad, Rosy."

"It must be, mother. I can't let him want."

"Why not?"

"You know I can't—only he must keep away from the theatre. He must promise that."

"I've no patience. He'll promise anything."

"Give it him, please, mother. Tell him he must make it last a long time—and send him away."

It was now dusk; street lamps were lighted and shining into the room. I had been sitting near the window, looking

out into the quiet street. It was Sunday, and there was little traffic. A man was standing by the post at the corner, crying "Walnuts" with a fruit basket poised on his head. There was no one else to be seen.

Mrs. Bembridge had again left the room. I was alone with Rosetta. She did not speak, but I could hear her sigh. I could hear, too, voices in the narrow hall down stairs. Presently the street door closed noisily.

"Come from the window, Duke," said Rosetta, starting up with some excitement of manner. "Yet what does it matter?" she added, almost in the same breath.

A figure crossed the roadway: a shuffling stumbling figure, dingly dressed, so far as I could see in the uncertain light, round-shouldered, and bowed forward, as it moved along. I could not be mistaken.

"Lord Overbury!" I said almost in a whisper.

"My husband!" Rosetta had hidden her face in her hands. She was crying, I think.

"Husband, indeed!" Mrs. Bembridge had hurriedly re-entered. "Come, Rosy, let's have no more of this nervous hysterical nonsense. Rouse yourself. 'Light up!' Let's have candles, and shut the shutters. I hate this sitting in the dark, like so many cats. If you can see, I can't. This 'between the lights,' as people call it, gives me the blue devils always. I begin to think myself a wicked old woman, and that there's nothing worth living for, and that the sooner I'm 'called,' for good, the better it will be for all parties. The wind blows cold, too. It isn't summer weather, you know. Shut out the night, and the cold, and the dark, and let's be as cheerful as we can. An old body like me may be allowed to be dull and dreary; but for two young folks such as you and our friend here to be giving way to the dismal like this, it's perfectly disgraceful—that's what it is. And on a Sunday, too, of all days in the week!"

Rosetta closed the windows, drew the curtains, and placed lighted candles upon the table. But she did all this as one in a dream might do it, and without uttering a word. Presently she resumed her former place at the table, again leaning forward, resting her head upon her hands.

"My husband," she repeated, softly. "For you know, mother, I always thought him my husband."

"Well, what does it all matter, now?"

demanded Mrs. Bembridge. "You were wrong, as it happened; but it wasn't your fault. Who dares say it was? You were wrong, and the man was a wretch. That's all about it. A good many men are wretches, and that's the truth."

"I was a mad, foolish girl."

"That's very likely."

"I had not sense enough to doubt him; and how was I to know that she was living?"

"You couldn't, of course you couldn't. My dear, you were shamefully used. There's not another word to be said about it. And now, for Heaven's sake, talk of something else."

"No, mother, I must talk of this."

"Well, then, excuse me if I take the easy chair and the newspaper and sit in the corner. And don't be shocked if I have a nap. I can't bear to hear you going on in this way, Rosy. What good can it do to you or me, or to our young friend here, or, indeed, to any one?"

"No good, mother. That's true enough."

"If you'd taken my advice, you'd have locked that monster up long ago, and let the law punish him, as the law would, if it's worth anything, of which, I own, I've doubts."

"I couldn't do that, mother. You know I couldn't. He's not really my husband—that seems plain enough."

"Not a doubt of it. You've been told so over and over again by people who should know, and who do know. That other woman was alive—lives still, I believe. You know what old Vickery said."

"Vickery!" I exclaimed.

"What, do you know him?" asked Mrs. Bembridge. "He's an old friend of mine. He knew all about the case. He, or the lawyer he was with—I don't understand these distinctions—but he's not exactly what you call a lawyer himself—had been mixed up in that wretch's business years ago."

I noticed that they never once mentioned Lord Overbury by name, although there could be no possible doubt that it was to him they referred. But Vickery! It took me by surprise to hear of him in connection with Rosetta's marriage.

"You may take old Vickery's word for it, Rosy," Mrs. Bembridge continued; "and if I've said so once, I'm sure I've said so a hundred times—that your marriage was no marriage."

"He's not really my husband," Rosetta

repeated. "I know that well enough. I ought to. Still I thought he was; and that protects him. It's not for me to punish him. Besides——"

"You'll say you love him next."

"No; but he knocked down Diavolo! I can never forget that. You don't know what a leap towards him my heart took when he did that!"

"Rosetta, you're crazy to go on in this way. At times you're a sensible girl enough, as girls go; but to-night you're fairly crazy." Mrs. Bembridge settled herself in her easy chair and retired behind the newspaper. "I'm sorry you let your friend, Mr. Nightingale, see you in this state. I'm ashamed of you. I don't know what's come to you. I can only assure you Mr. Nightingale, that my lady is not often thus."

"But Duke was there!" cried Rosetta.

"He saw him knock down Diavolo, at a blow! a single blow! although Diavolo was as strong as a giant. He could lift enormous weights with his teeth. He could bend bars of iron. He could twist a poker round his neck until it met in front. Yet he went down at a blow! I can hear even now the thump of his fall upon the earth." She spoke with extraordinary excitement; but, after a pause, she continued in a calmer tone. "Ah, Duke, you saw that, you remember? But who could forget it? You were standing by, a mere boy at the time, yet even you, when Diavolo struck me, tried to rush in and shield me. I saw you though I mocked you at the time. My dear, you could have done nothing. Diavolo was my master. He often struck me; he had a right to—so they all said. I was his apprentice. I was to be taught, and beaten if need be, until I did what he told me. What a life it was! And how long it had been going on! It seemed to me that it would never end. I remember Diavolo almost as long as I remember anything. And there was no one to come between him and me; no one dared, he being such a wretch as he was. For father and mother—they were idle, meaningless words to me—I knew nothing of them. I was a stray child. Heaven only can tell why or when or where I came into the world. I came to be Diavolo's apprentice—and for that only, as it seemed. Well, he fed and clothed me after a fashion—and somehow, I learnt to read and write—I often wonder now how that happened. But something I picked up from the other children, his apprentices,

who had been, so far, a little more fortunate than myself. I learnt my letters, I remember, from the bills outside the tents, and something the riders and the circus people taught me. They were kind to me—there are many good true hearts among them—very kind; for they saw what a poor forlorn little wretch I was, and how cruelly Diavolo used me. But they did not dare to interfere much, for that only made it the worse for me. I can hear the whistling of his horrible cane even now; I can almost feel it slashing upon my poor shoulders. What a miserable life it was! Not that I was always crying and repining; don't think that, Duke. I had a child's glad heart—a child's happy forgetfulness—at times I could laugh and make merry with the rest, when our tyrant's back was turned. Once I remember, while he was at the public-house, we broke up and burnt his cane. But we suffered the more for it afterwards; he bought a thicker one. And I liked the applause, the rows and rows of admiring faces, the sea of clapping hands—when I danced. They threw flowers to me sometimes, and sometimes halfpence. I was welcome to the flowers; but the halfpence Diavolo took to buy drink with—for himself. Still, what a life it was, I say again! I shudder and shiver as I think of it. Are you listening, mother?" she asked, suddenly turning to Mrs. Bembridge.

"No, my dear. If I were to listen, I should cry. Besides, I've heard it all before."

"Well, Duke, then you came with him. You both spoke kindly to me—he was rough in his ways, but still he was kind, he meant to be kind—while you were blushing and trembling like a girl, with admiration and love. Wasn't it so? But we won't speak of that. He offered me escape. Think what that was to me! Escape from my miserable life, from blows, and cruelty, and want—from Diavolo! I could not hesitate. It was not because he was a lord and rich, as they said. That was but a small part of the temptation. It was not for love, heaven knows!—the man was old and hideous. But he was able to save and protect me. I had seen him strike down Diavolo. It was very wicked, no doubt; but my heart thrilled with joy and gratitude to him when he did that. I felt that he had fairly won me, and might wear me if he chose—that when he said 'come with me,' I needs must go—there was no

help for it. It was escape, at any rate, let come what might afterwards. So, as you know, I went with him—away from you, from the fair, from Diavolo, from my old life, as I thought, for ever, in a post-chaise and four; it was the first time I had ever travelled so grandly."

She paused for a few moments, collecting her thoughts, as it seemed, or dwelling upon her memories of the past.

"I was to be his wife; he promised me that—he swore it—he was always swearing. I was but a child in years—ignorant enough, I need not say; yet something I had learnt, more than most children perhaps, of the world's wickedness. I had a knife with me. I had kept it hidden by me ready sharpened for some time—to use it—I scarce know how—against myself perhaps, or Diavolo, though I never had courage enough for that, often and often as I wished for his death. But I am wearying you with this long story. He kept his word to me; at least he seemed to keep it. We journeyed on and on, without stopping, weary hours and hours, fast as four horses could go. Diavolo gave chase, but not for long, I heard afterwards, and he took the wrong road. If he had overtaken us, he could have done nothing. He would have been knocked down again, perhaps. And I had my knife! We were married in Scotland, just across the border. It was a lawful marriage, people said, though it took scarcely a minute. I was given my marriage lines, and I called myself, like a fool, Lady Overbury, and thought it sounded well."

"I don't want to be unjust to him," she resumed presently. "He was violent, reckless, and for a long while we wandered hither and thither in a purposeless way; we had no settled abode. He was not rich, as it proved; indeed people said he was ruined, though somehow he had money enough to squander. Still he was kind to me when he was himself; but that wasn't always, for he drank like Diavolo, and then he didn't know what he said or did. I was treated at first like a spoilt child, or a pet plaything. I amused him, I suppose. Then came his sullen morose fits, and he was unendurable, or his storms of wild anger, and then he was worse. He grew tired of me—but he didn't beat me—so far he was not the tyrant Diavolo had been. And at first, in his good-humoured moods, he even took some pains to educate me. I learnt lessons and did exercises. That didn't last long. Still it

improved me. He had read many books, you know, Duke," she explained, simply; "he had been to college and was really learned—though he had not turned his learning to very good account. But he was very different in that way to the people—the riders and circus folks—I had lived amongst. For all his strange looks, and rough doings, he was a nobleman, and had not altogether forgotten how to behave like one. He was bad enough, but he was not all bad. And he would have me be a lady, he said; he corrected me when my words or my ways seemed to be too much those of the circus. He made me rich presents; he bought splendid dresses for me to wear. And then I used to act, and learn speeches, and recite them, to please him or to keep him in a good humour. I was a different creature, after my marriage, to the child you saw in the booth at the fair. My marriage, I say, for I thought I was married. But he tired of me, as I said. And then we quarrelled. I was jealous; as his wife, I had cause to be. We led a wretched life together. At times I thought him downright mad. I ran away from him, as you know. I was not too patient, perhaps; but indeed it was more than I could bear. You found me in the snow. I was going, I hardly know where, now—back to my old life somehow—for I knew that Diavolo was dead. I saw it in the newspaper. Your mother—good, kind, sweet soul—took me back to the Hall. It was best, perhaps. He had brought me there—why, I don't know—it was a sudden freak of his. We had moved about in that way, going from place to place, like gipsies, or soldiers on a march. Well, we made up our quarrel for the time. He promised amendment—promised all sorts of things—and we were friends again. It's odd, I think now, the sort of power he possessed over me then. I was afraid of him, and I was grateful to him. Had he so willed, I should have stayed with him for ever—wretch that he was—if only he had given me a kind word now and then. But that wasn't to be. You loved me—didn't you, Duke? and didn't you—or was it all a dream?—look in at the window when I was sitting with him beside the fire in the little room at the Hall? that bitter night, after your mother had taken me home?"

"It was not a dream, Rosetta," I

answered, with some feeling of shame at the thought of my old infatuation, and I related some particulars of my adventures on that memorable night.

"You loved me, my Duke! How proud I ought to feel—and I *was* proud of it—I knew it, though I knew too that it was folly, and that it wouldn't, couldn't last. Still my heart yearned very tenderly towards you, Duke. And yet, in some strange way, your love did not then seem so much to me as one kind word from him. I can't explain it. I can't reason upon it. I dreaded him, at times I loathed him—you know something of what he was—not all; and yet at times I almost loved him too. At least, so it seemed to me, and so, looking back upon it now, with very changed eyes, it still seems to me. You see, Duke, we women are strange creatures. If you haven't found that out for yourself, you will. We're very, very strange creatures."

"Speak for yourself, Rosy, please," interposed Mrs. Bembridge. "Don't speak for me, at any rate. I'll not own that I'm a strange creature, if I die for it."

"Have you been listening, mother?"

"No. But I couldn't help hearing. How can I sleep with all that incessant chatter, chatter, going on? It's nonsensical enough to set one dozing—but it doesn't. When are you going to stop?"

"Very soon now. But you said I had 'the talks' on me. I must make your words good. And my Duke isn't tired."

"I think I caught something about his having once been in love with you. I don't wonder that he soon changed his mind."

"I'm just coming to where I met with the dearest, kindest soul in the world, who took pity on me, and sheltered and helped me in my very sore need. Who saved me, and who's been a mother to me since, the best of mothers, and who is my dear old friend for ever." She rose quickly and caressed her friend.

"I don't want kisses. But I should like," said Mrs. Bembridge, "a glass of hot brandy and water, strong, with sugar in it—or I'm sure I shall not get a wink of sleep this blessed night."

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